Gov. Rick Snyder: The past seven years are just the beginning of Michigan's comeback story

LANSING, Mich. - From the state Capitol, Gov. Rick Snyder this evening presented his eighth State of the State speech.

The governor gave an overview of the tough work done during the past seven years – analyzing what went wrong during the previous decade when Michigan lost three-quarters of a million jobs, and then reinventing the tax code, balancing and reprioritizing the state's budget expenditures, and returning money to taxpayers through reduced taxes and fees.

Since December 2010, Michigan has added 540,000 new private-sector jobs.

"Our comeback has been tremendous," Gov. Snyder said. "We've reversed the unemployment rate. We've stopped outward migration. Now we're accelerating this comeback into the future. We have taken our challenges and made them opportunities. Now, as a state of nearly 10 million people, we need to stay committed to maintaining and accelerating this path. How do we make sure that each successive year in the future is better than the prior one?"

The 60-minute speech outlined how far Michigan has come – from a bottom 10 to a top 10 state in seven years – including leading the world in exciting and emerging areas such as mobility. Gov. Snyder highlighted the tough work that went into paying down debt and putting Michigan on a sustainable fiscal path, without the pitfalls and deficit spending of the past. He spoke about the successes of Healthy Michigan and the resources the state has committed to fighting the opioid epidemic.

During Gov. Snyder's speech, he also spoke at length about four Michiganders whose lives have been changed as part of the comeback and how it is helping to shape the future of the state:

> **Challenge:** Michigan must prepare our youth for 21st Century careers.
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> **Opportunity:** Programs such as FIRST Robotics and Square One are shaping the STEM education of the future.
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> **Great Michigander:** Jeremiah Nelson, a two-year old who has the most severe form of spina bifida. Jeremiah can't crawl or walk, and his life changed dramatically when students from the Petoskey and Central Lake FIRST Robotics

teams came together to retool a Power Wheels car to improve Jeremiah's mobility. Michigan has more FIRST teams than any other state in the country and is preparing students for the tech jobs of the future.

Challenge: Michigan is competing with the West Coast for Millennial talent.

Great Michigander: Kristin Ides Hope, who grew up in California and graduated from college in San Francisco, could have chosen to work in Silicon Valley but picked Detroit instead. Kristin works in the burgeoning financial technology scene downtown and never plans to leave the Comeback City to return to the West Coast.

Challenge: 95 percent of people in prison will be paroled. 100 percent of those people need a job.

Opportunity: Michigan Department of Corrections' Vocational Village, which trains ex-offenders in professional trades and works with local employers to hire them.

Great Michigander: Salvador Guittierez was imprisoned in Ionia for a series of drug crimes when he enrolled in Michigan's first Vocational Village and earned four nationally accredited certifications in CNC machining. Salvador now works at Transmatic in Holland.

Challenge: Veterans transitioning to civilian life sometimes need assistance figuring out how their skills fit into the corporate world.

Opportunity: The Michigan Veteran Affairs Agency's Veteran-Friendly Employers program, which works with employers to hire veterans and mentor other companies to enroll in the program.

Great Michigander: Kyle Jastren of Livonia had served in the United States Marine Corps until a medical discharge sent him back into the civilian world. Through an internet search, Kyle matched up with Roush, which is one of Michigan's Gold-Certified Veteran Friendly Employers for their commitment to hiring veterans. Kyle started as a project manager and now serves as a general manager – a role in which he now hires even more veterans to work at Roush.

For the last year of his term, Gov. Snyder looks forward to several key milestones, including breaking ground on the Gordie Howe International Bridge and the grand opening of the American Center for Mobility at Willow Run. He also plans to continue leading delegations nationally and internationally to draw new investments in mobility, and work with the state Legislature to marshal new resources to win the talent race.

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/stateofthestate, or join the conversation at #misots18.

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